ZONING

CHARLOTTESVILLE

CVILLE PLANS TOGETHER

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GENERAL ZONING GLOSSARY

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT: An apartment or cottage on a lot where there is already a house. May also be called an in-law suite or granny flat.

AFFORDABLE DWELLING UNIT: A home that is required to be affordable to someone who has a low income as defined by federal standards.

BONUS: Additional development potential available for developers who provide more affordable homes, an environmentally friendly building, or some other public benefit.

BY-RIGHT: A project that meets all the requirements of the specified zoning ordinance. It does not need approval from the City Council.

COMMERCIAL USES: A category of land uses that includes stores, offices, restaurants, and similar uses.

COMMUNITY MEETING: A public discussion between interested stakeholders on a project of interest.

FLOOR AREA, GROSS: The total floor area within a building.

FLOOR AREA RATIO: The total floor area within a building divided by the size of the lot.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP (FLUM): An important part of the Comprehensive Plan that shows how areas in the city should be generally developed in the future. The FLUM is not the same as zoning.

INCLUSIONARY ZONING: A requirement that a specific percentage of housing units in a project or development remain affordable for a specified period to households with incomes that are defined as moderate, low, or very low. Bonuses are sometimes offered to developers for building more affordable units by allowing more market rate units.

INTENSITY: A measure of the size of the building and scale of uses allowed on a lot.

LOT COVERAGE: The size of a building's footprint in comparison to the size of the parcel.

OVERLAY: A designation on a zoning map that modifies the basic underlying zoning in some specific manner. For example, overlay zones are often used to address the special needs of flood zones or historic areas.

PUBLIC HEARING: Allows Virginia counties, cities, and towns to gather public views and concerns before any pending amendment is made by the local legislature. A requirement under Virginia state law.

SCALE: The size of buildings, streets, or other development elements.

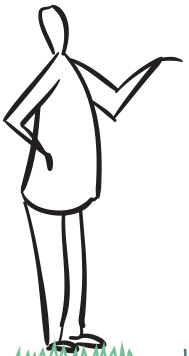
SETBACK: The distance from a curb, property line, or structure where building is prohibited.

SITE PLAN: The plans showing what someone wants to build.

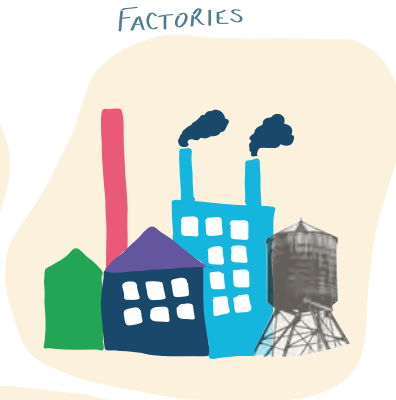
ZONING: The division of the city into areas, or zones, that specify allowed uses, building placement, and size restrictions. Zoning is a tool to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

HOW ZONING WORKS

WHAT IS ZONING?



Most cities have rules about what you can build and where. These rules make up zoning law. This guide will help you understand what zoning is and how it works in Charlottesville!



What you can build depends on where, or in what 'zone', your property is located. The city uses zoning to group land into different areas, or zones, with rules about what you can build in each one.

WHY DO WE HAVE ZONING?

Zoning keeps similar things together and keeps apart things that don't go well together. **Zoning doesn't actually build anything.** Zoning only lays out what people can build in different zones.

It does this by regulating 2 things:

1. the **type of activities** that happen in them

2. building **size, shape, and location on a lot**

Lets say you build a house on your lot...

NICE!

and then someone builds a waste center next door..

NOT SO NICE!

If you own property in a residential zone, you can't build a factory. But neither can your neighbors. Everyone in the neighborhood plays by the same rules. Ideally, zoning balances private property rights with the interests of the public.

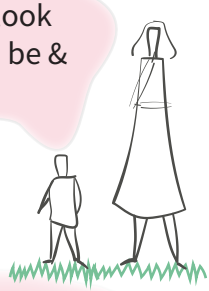
How Does Zoning Affect Land Use?

Districts contain required standards for the design of sites and buildings, as well as a list of the **uses** allowed in each district. Districts are typically grouped and organized into **divisions** such as residential, mixed-use, industrial, and special districts.

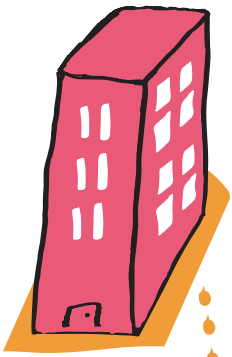
Inside districts, there may be many varying levels of **intensity** allowed. Higher intensity can mean larger buildings and more mixed uses, such as commercial and residential.

HOW DOES ZONING AFFECT THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF BUILDINGS?

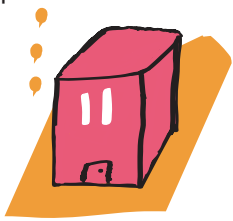
Zoning doesn't say what a building should look like, but it has rules about what shape it can be & how big it can be.



Small buildings on big lots have a low FAR



$$\frac{\text{1000 square foot floor area}}{\text{2000 square foot lot}} = \mathbf{0.5}$$



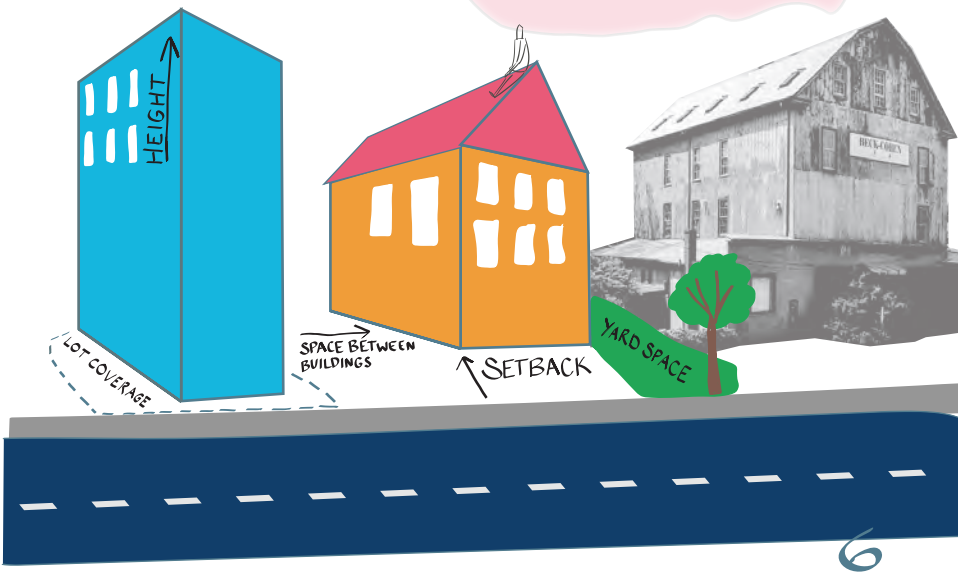
One way zoning controls size and shape is called F-A-R or **Floor Area Ratio**

$$\frac{\text{20000 square foot floor area}}{\text{2000 square foot lot}} = \mathbf{10.0}$$

Big buildings on small lots have a high FAR

Other ways include:

- **space between buildings**
- **lot coverage requirements**
- **yard requirements**
- **height regulations**
- **setbacks**



WHAT IS REZONING?

When zoning changes, it's called a rezoning. **Any landowner can propose a rezoning of their own property. The City can also rezone properties for public benefit.**

Rezonings can usually be placed into two categories: **Upzonings & Downzonings.**

Upzonings increase the allowable amount or intensity of development. This usually occurs when the city finds that the existing zone is not meeting the needs of its citizens.

UPZONINGS

Downzonings are simply the opposite of upzonings. They decrease the maximum allowed development.

DOWNZONINGS

HISTORY OF ZONING IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

Single-family zoning, which makes up most of the city's land use, has historically been a tool to create and reinforce racial segregation in Charlottesville and nationwide. It has also limited the development of housing, contributing to rising housing costs.

The City adopted its first zoning code in **1929** to limit residential development to a single unit per property.

The code was updated in the **1930s** to allow two units per property as the lowest density option.

A new zoning map for was released in **1991.** It expanded single-family zoning, limited residential density, and reduced affordability.

The existing zoning code was adopted in **2003**, allowing for mixed-use zoning and higher by-right density in some locations.

In **2022,** the Zoning Code Rewrite builds on the City's Affordable Housing Plan to address the legacy of exclusionary zoning and limited housing supply.

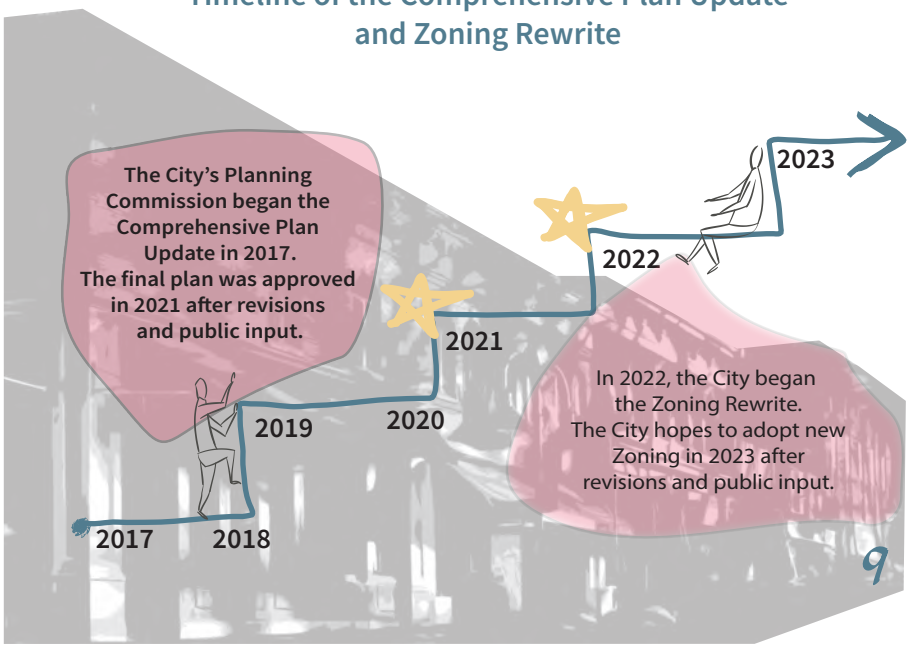
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE & ZONING REWRITE

The **Comprehensive Plan** is a citywide plan that guides the City as it identifies and addresses future changes in ways that will meet the needs of all Charlottesville residents. Comprehensive Plans are usually updated every 5 to 10 years!

Cville's updated "Comp Plan" showcases future actions regarding the city's growth, its priorities, its development and redevelopment, its health and well-being, and the services that it provides.

The **Zoning Rewrite** aims to implement the goals of Charlottesville's new Comprehensive Plan, adopted in November 2021.

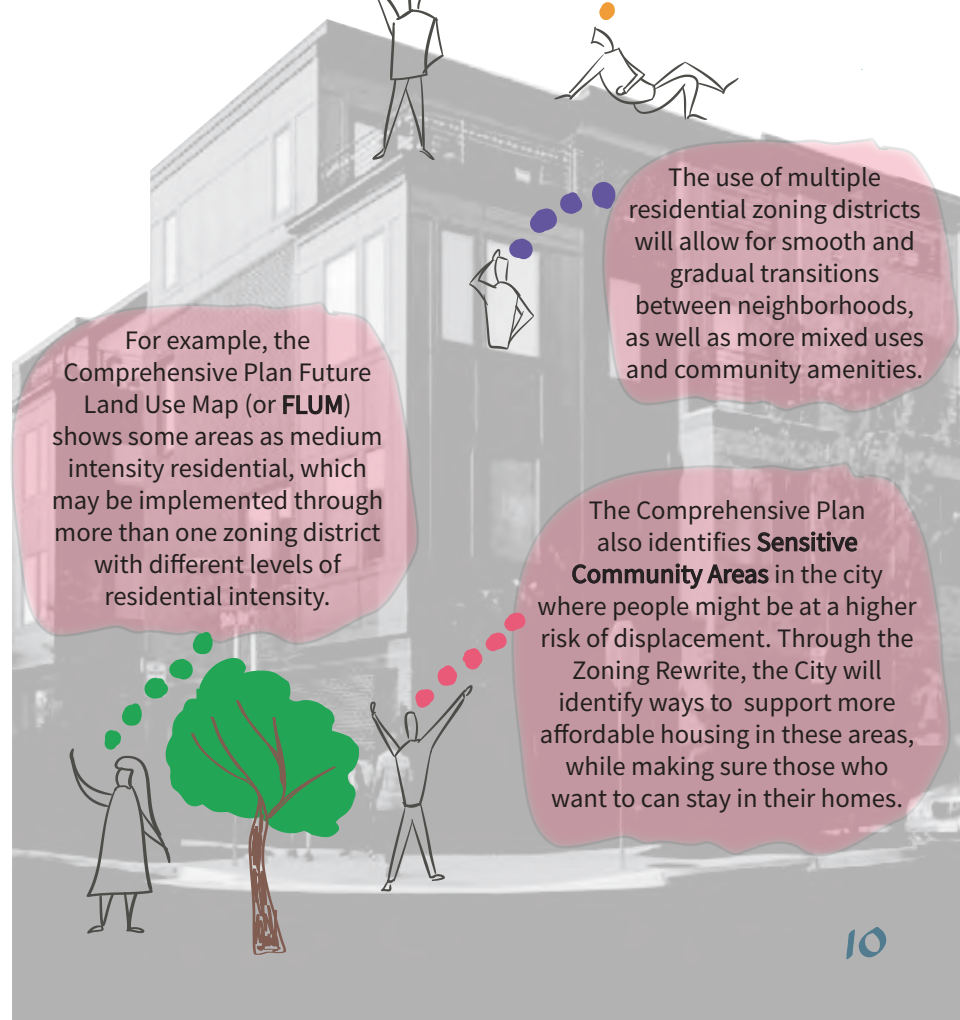
Timeline of the Comprehensive Plan Update and Zoning Rewrite


The City's Planning Commission began the Comprehensive Plan Update in 2017. The final plan was approved in 2021 after revisions and public input.
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
In 2022, the City began the Zoning Rewrite. The City hopes to adopt new Zoning in 2023 after revisions and public input.

How can the zoning rewrite make my neighborhood better?

Rezoning can lead to many longterm positive changes in the community, including more housing options, more affordable housing, green space, and greater walkability.

It's important to remember that the zoning rewrite will *not* start any new construction, but **will change what is allowed to be developed** over many years.



The use of multiple residential zoning districts will allow for smooth and gradual transitions between neighborhoods, as well as more mixed uses and community amenities.

For example, the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (or **FLUM**) shows some areas as medium intensity residential, which may be implemented through more than one zoning district with different levels of residential intensity.

The Comprehensive Plan also identifies **Sensitive Community Areas** in the city where people might be at a higher risk of displacement. Through the Zoning Rewrite, the City will identify ways to support more affordable housing in these areas, while making sure those who want to can stay in their homes.

LOOKING AHEAD

For more information on the Comprehensive Plan, the zoning rewrite, or opportunities for further engagement please contact Cville Plans Together.

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